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ON SOME QUANTITIES IN PHAELRUS

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[n.p.] n.d.]
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АНАТОЛИЙ СЕМЕНОВ ЧАСТЬ I (1941-1945 гг.)

¹⁰ See, for example, the 1991 report of the UN Commission of Experts on the UN and the Balkans, *Report of the Commission of Experts on the UN and the Balkans* (Geneva, 1991).

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ON SOME QUANTITIES IN PHAEDRUS.

I.—*NIHIL* AND *NIL*.

SCOLARS are agreed that in Latin poets this neuter substantive occurs in three forms of different quantity, *nihil*, *nihil*, and *nil*¹; but in what circumstances they are not agreed. So for Phaedrus. Lucian Mueller, in his edition of 1877, p. 105, rejects the form *nihil* in every part of the verse except the final iambus: “*Nota Phaedrum semper dicere nil pro nihil praeter finem versus (IV 5. 16; 24. 4).*” But M. L. Havet (§91 of the *Disquisitiones Criticae* appended to his edition) is of another opinion. We must therefore examine the evidence anew, and in so doing distinguish between the tradition of the P(ithoeanus) and the lost R(emensis) and the tradition of the Perottine MSS., the N(eapolitanus), and V(aticanus).

A. *Before a consonant.*

In two places, for which see below, both the PR tradition and the NV tradition give *nihil* where it is metrically possible.

In the remaining seven places, I 15. 2, III 10. 31, *ib.* 51, IV 22. 13, V 5. 31, App. 5. 9, 18. 16, *nihil* is metrically impossible. P(R) gives it, however, in five cases out of five, and NV in two cases also out of five.

¹ In what follows I shall consider nothing but the quantity of the words. I shall assume, as is generally assumed, that the monosyllable should be written

nil, and I shall not deal with the question whether the spelling *nihil*, so common in manuscripts, is a survival (as in *dehinc*) or an intrusion.

ON SOME QUANTITIES IN PHAEDRUS.

B. Before a vowel.

The places are as follows¹: III 7. 17, “nihil | est” (PNV); IV 13. 1, “nihil | es” (P); App. 30. 8, “Nihil est” | (NV); IV 2. 2, “nihil | habemus” (P); IV 24. 17, “nihil | habes” (PNV); II 5. 3, “nihil | agens” (P); III 17. 13, “Nihil age | re” (P)²; IV 24. 9, “nihil | atque” (PNV); App. 26. 4, “nihil | umquam” (NV). At II 7. 12 NV give “nihil | amisi,” but P “nil”; and at V 5. 20 P gives “Nihil est” |, but V “Nil est”. At II 8. 11, where P gives “nec ideo,” NV “nihil” only, the received correction is “nihil (or ‘nil’) | adeo.”

Summing up, we see that in eight out of ten places in which Phaedrus may be presumed to have used the word before vowels, PR give *nihil*, in one *nil*, and in the remaining one *nec*; while in seven out of eight places NV give *nihil*, and in one *nil* (V). In all these places Mueller reads *nil*, and, having regard to the facts that PR give *nihil* for *nil* in every case where a consonant follows, and that NV do the same in two cases out of five, we cannot call him unreasonable. But inasmuch as we can scan with *nihil* in at least every place but one, and since the assumption that an original *nihil* was left uncorrupted in every passage but two is *prima facie* tenable, for further direction we must look outside Phaedrus.

An examination of the quantity of *nihil/nil* before a vowel cannot avoid a reference to Lachmann's dictum on *Lucr.* 1. 159, and in *Kl. Schr.* II, p. 59, that Ovid did not use *nihil* in this position. It is now twenty-seven years since I protested against that dictum,³ as others had done

¹ The upright line marks the end of a foot.

Cambridge Philological Society on May 5, 1892, and published in brief abstract in its *Proceedings*, XXXI-III, p. 7.

² I take no account of the interpolation at the beginning of IV 24.

³ In a short paper read before the

before me. And it gratifies me to observe that Professor Housman's attitude towards it has passed from acceptance to doubt (*Classical Quarterly*, 1916, p. 138)¹ and from doubt to rejection (*Classical Review*, 1919, p. 57). His treatment of the matter is worthy of attention. He finds that there are eighteen lines of Ovid in which this word constitutes the latter half of the first foot, and it is given by the MSS. as *nihil*, and three only, *Met.* 13. 266, *Fast.* 1. 445, and *Ibis* 284, in which it appears as *nil*; and he maintains that in these three verses also *nihil* should be read with Heinsius. The effect of this will be to give a dactyl in every first foot where the word occurs, and Mr. Housman is of opinion that this was its motive also. "His [Ovid's] only imaginable motive [my italics] was to procure a dactyl instead of a spondee for the first foot." Further on he adduces instances where in the second, third, and fourth feet of hexameters the same word precedes a vowel, and where the MSS., or the best part of them (in one place, *Met.* 15, 165, about a half), favour the form *nihil*. These instances amount to thirty. By needlessly restricting his imagination Mr. Housman has failed to perceive the connexion between his two series of instances, and to divine the significance of the poet's behaviour, who was

¹ In a paper containing excellent suggestions for the improvement of the text of Ovid, but handling *ex Pont.* II 5. 11 sq. "optastique *breuem salui* mihi Caesaris iram | quod tamen optari si sciatis ipse sinat" (so the MSS.), with odd negligence or perversity. Much discontent has been felt with the hexameter. But it is here contended that "all is well, and the conjectures are all aimed at the one word" [*salui*] "which must on no account be altered," and this for the reason that the prayer that Caesar's anger might be short contains "a dangerous ambiguity," since "one way to shorten Caesar's

anger is to shorten Caesar's life." One might suppose from this that no pentameter followed the hexameter, or that this too contained a dangerous ambiguity, as Caesar *might* approve of a prayer for his own demise. As an objection to the *breui solui*, which I had proposed, and Mr. S. G. Owen accepted, the argument is still more out of place, as in the parallel adduced in its defence, *Met.* 9. 274 sq. "neque adhuc Stheneleius *iras|soluerat* Eurystheus," the phrase is used of a *living* person. *Salui* then remains suspicious, being at best but a clumsy superfluity.

not pursuing a dactyl, but avoiding *nil*. Neither before a vowel nor before a consonant, neither as part of a dactyl nor of a spondee (I may cite in illustration *Fasti*. 6. 124, 125, "Nil agis"; *Pont.* I 7. 20, "Nil demit"; IV 9. 126, "Nil illi") is *nil* excluded from the first foot of either hexameter or pentameter; but both in it and in the three following feet its use in the "fall" of the foot is subject to restriction to which it is not subject in the "rise."¹ It may precede a consonant; but it may not precede a vowel. When the eighteen instances from the first foot are reinforced by the thirty from the following ones, we have *forty-eight* conformers to but *three* recalcitrants—an increase in the ratio which far more than justifies the removal of the latter, notwithstanding the comparative infrequency of the corruption of *nihil* to *nil*, whose ratio Holder, *Epilogomena zu Horaz* on *Epist.* II 1. 17, estimates as two to eleven of the converse corruption.

To this Ovidian rule that *nil* may be used in the "rise" of a foot before both vowels and consonants, but in the "fall" before consonants only, I have found but few exceptions in all the verse writers that I have examined. Catullus, Tibullus, Propertius appear to observe it; so also Martial. The scazon of the latter, I 10. 3, "adeone pulchra est? immo foediús níl est," is of course in order. VERGIL'S practice may be seen at *Aen.* 11. 227 sq. "*nihil omnibus actum . . . nil dona neque aurum*" (cf. *Buc.* 8. 103). He has but one example of *nil* before a vowel as against some fifteen of *nihil* (for the "nil urbibus" of *PYb*, at *Aen.* 10. 54, may be disregarded), and that is in the "rise" *G.* 3. 42, "nil altum." HORACE uses both forms frequently. And a full statement of his usage may be of interest. *Nihil* appears *twenty-three* times before a vowel (*nine* times

¹ I adopt these terms from Professor Sonnenschein, *Classical Philology*, VI (1911), p. 9, note, as affording less

room for misconception than any of the current ones.

before a consonant); *nil* appears forty times before a consonant, twenty-three times before a vowel in the *rise*, five before one in the *fall*.¹ These five are *S.* II. 2. 29, “*distat nil, hac magis illa*”; *ib.* 6. 4, “*nil amplius oro*”; *Epist.* I 2. 46, “*nil amplius*” (where *nihil* also is well supported), with two examples in *Epist.* II 1; 17, “*nil oriturum alias nil ortum tale fatentes*,” 31, “*nil intra est olea, nil extra est in nuce duri*,” where a special reason may be discerned. For Horace avoids the variation between *nihil* and *nil* in juxtaposition which Vergil has in the passages cited above, and of which Mr. Housman, *Classical Review*, l.c., has given other examples: see *Epist.* I 1. 88; 8. 8; II 1. 65. LUCAN, at 8. 315 sq., has “*nihil haec in membra cruenta | nil sacerum fecisse pie*.” But he does not seem to have excluded *nil* before a vowel from the “fall.” 7. 88; 8. 858; 10. 96; *ib.* 366, for all of which *nihil* is weakly attested. *Nihil*, on the other hand, in 1. 37; 2. 515; 3. 371; 7. 666; 7. 268; 8. 315; 10. 189, possibly also in 6. 819, 8. 665. JUVENAL (if I have reckoned aright) uses *nihil* nineteen times: five before consonants and fourteen before vowels. *Nil* he uses thirty-one times: twenty-one before consonants and eight times before vowels, twice also at the end of a line (a perfectly ambiguous position). There remain three places about which doubt might be felt. In 7. 54, “*qui nihil expositum*” (*nil* the Pithoeanus in isolation) is, as Mr. Housman has shown, *Classical Review*, l.c., p. 58b, undoubtedly to be preferred. There remain 6. 58, “*quis tamen adfirmat nil* (PFOU, *nihil* AGLT) *actum in mensibus aut in | speluncis?*” and 15. 87 sq. “*sed qui mordere cadauer | sustinuit nil* (PAFOT, *nihil* GLU) *umquam hac carne libentius edit*,” on which he comments, “*nihil AGLT ut solet Iuuenalis in altero semipede ante uocalem; hic*

¹ He has also two examples of *nil* as the last syllable of a hexameter, *Epist.* I 12. 5, 15. 33, and one as the

first syllable of the Alcaic, “*nil interest an*,” *Carm.* II 3. 22.

tamen et xv 88 Pithoeanus sequendus uidetur propter numeros." As I cannot divine what are the "numeri" supporting *nil* to the overthrow of those conceded to support *nihil* "ut solet," etc., I am disposed to regard it as not improbable that Juvenal did not deviate from the rhythm which he has used nine times elsewhere, and which here has respectable MS. support.

Manilius, as Lachmann has noted, uses *nihil* only (thirteen times), in sharp contrast to Lucretius, who does not use the dissyllable at all. This consistency in diction, which approves them writers of a now unfashionable type, prevents us also from citing them as witnesses for the purpose in hand. But an examination of the usage of Lucretius, which I made with the assistance of Paulson's *Index Lucretianus*, gives some curious and, as I think, not uninstructive results. Lucretius has *nil*, nominative and accusative, *ninety-three* times; *sixty-five* times in the "rise" and *twenty-eight* times in the "fall." But this noticeable preference of *nil* for the "rise" is not all. There is a marked disparity in the distribution of the two cases. It will, I imagine, be admitted that nominatives carry more weight than accusatives, and particularly so if these are nominatives of neuter words, such being but rarely allowed to function as subjects in ancient speech. If there is weight in this consideration, it would appear that a feeling for balance will naturally place the weaker case where it will be reinforced by the stronger position, while the stronger case will be allowed whichever position may for other reasons be convenient. And we find that out of *fifty-eight* accusatives, *forty-six* are in the "rise" and but *twelve* in the "fall"; and that out of *thirty-five* nominatives, *nineteen* are in the "rise" and as many as *sixteen* in the "fall."

To some perhaps all this may seem artificial; but it must not be assumed to be arbitrary. There is nothing

novel in the view that the "rise" and the "fall" were treated diversely. For example, Vergil and other contemporary poets allow the final syllable of the 3rd person singular of verbs to stand as long in the "rise" but not in the "fall." They permit, e.g., *essét*, but not *éssel* (as Ennius), to count as two long syllables.

The clue which we have sought in this digression may now be applied to the text of Phaedrus. Of the twelve passages cited on p. 53, nine have the word in the "rise" of the foot and three in the "fall." In one of the former, II. 7. 12, P gives "nam *nil* amisi," while the Perottine MSS. present "quod *nihil* amisi," which editors have done well to reject, since, in view of P's constant preference for *nihil*, *nil* is much more likely to have been accidentally left than *nihil* corrupted, and since unfaithfulness in NV is already proved by the alteration of "nam" to "quod." In this passage, and the eight remaining, *nil*, I think, should be read. In the other three passages *nihil*, on the contrary, may well be retained, and V's solitary *nil* at V. 5. 20 disregarded. The preponderance of *nihil* in our MSS. does not really need explanation when we consider that it has ousted *nil* almost entirely from the MSS. of Lucretius: see Lachmann, *l.c.* But we may observe that the confusion would be facilitated if both *nihil* and *nil* were in the text of Phaedrus, and the copyists, perplexed to see both forms before vowels, assimilated them in accordance with the practice recommended in the dictum of Seruius on *Aen.* 6. 104.

There remain two passages where L. Mueller changes a *nihil* of the vulgate which is neither plainly unmetrical nor followed by a vowel.

The first is IV. 24. 16, "*nihil* laboras, ideo cum opus est, *nil* habes," where for "ideo cum" PNV have "ideoque." Mueller conflates both lections, and transposes the first two words of the line, reading "laboras *nil*; ideoque cum opus

est." The change is a complicated one, nor is it obviously necessary. We cannot discuss it without reference to the second passage, III. 10. 27 sq., thus corruptly given in PR:

ut sentit tonsum, gladio pectus transigit
nihil in respiciendum dolorem uindicit.

The Perottine MSS. offer "nihil respiciens dum," accepted by most editors, and giving an example exactly similar to the last. Since, however, this leaves the *in* of PR unaccounted for, Mueller proposed "introspectiens," and, of course, *nil* for "nihil"; and M. Havet has accepted *introspectiens*, but rejected *nil*. In itself, however, the *respiciens* which NV give, and PR indicate, is intrinsically much better than what is offered in its stead. And if account is to be taken of *in*, as indeed seems reasonable, I would suggest "*nil iam respiciens*," the *iam* expressing the climax of the jealous husband's fury. If *nihil* may be kept here, *nihil* is safe also in IV 24. 16. If not, it will still be rash to deny to Phaedrus a combination which Horace, Vergil, and Ovid, to say nothing of others,¹ by no means eschewed.²

II.—VESPERTILIO.

This word occurs in a Phaedrian fable, which I have endeavoured, in the *Classical Quarterly*, 1918, p. 159, to restore to its original form. Its quantity is generally taken to be *uespertilio*, on the strength of *de Philomela* 39, "strix nocturna sonans et uespertilio stridunt," Baehrens,

¹ Seneca would be one of these, but I have omitted his name from the text, as I can find little to show whether in iambics his preference was for *nihil* or *nil* in different parts of the foot.

² It was no part of my task to consider the connexion of the two forms *nihil* and *nil*. But it may be worth noting that the affection of *nil* for

consonants and of *nihil* for vowels, which Seruius, l.c., had observed, reminds us of the similar dispositions of *ac* and *atque*, and prompts the conjecture that *nil*, like *ac*, arose from syncopation before a following consonant; compare Sommer, *Handbuch*, p. 292.

P. L. M. v. 365. This composition of seventy lines must accordingly be examined.

Its monkish author (l. 69, "Cuncta tamen Domino depro-
munt munera laudis | seu semper sileant siue sonare
queant") is a versifier whose quality may be gathered from pentameters such as the following:—"et castus turtur atque
columba gemunt," 20; noctua lucifugā cucubit in tenebris,"
40; "sed fugiente die illa quieta solet," 12.

Let us now test his prosody in respect of the names of birds and animals that he records. Omitting *uespertilio* and names like *turdus noctua*, where mistake was impossible, the record is as follows:—CORRECT—philomela, merulus, anas, pauo, aquilae, pica, cicada, apis, bubo, ululae, regulus, meropo, lupus, aper, onagri, equus, aries, ovis, canis, catulus, lepores, rana, columba, palumbes, accipitres; add partially correct, or doubtful, hīrundō būtiō. INCORRECT—ācredula, grāculus, cīconīa, cucūli, sōrex. Facts like these show that our author is but a poor witness for the classical prosody of a comparatively rare word; and if his scansion is based merely on vulgar pronunciation, it is less probable that in that *uespertilio* should have been shortened to *uespertilio* than *uespertilio* lengthened to *uespertilio*.

The word itself appears not to have been found elsewhere in Latin, or even base Latin, verse; but it is replaced by periphrases in Serenus Sammonicus 664, "quem dat
auis, tremulis simulat quae pellibus alas," and Ovid, *Met.* 4. 414, "lucemque perosae | nocte uolant seroque tenent
a *uespere nomen*." This might be taken to mean that the name was avoided because *uespertilio*, -ōnis, in all its cases was unavailable for dactylic verse. But Serenus shortens final ō whenever he chooses: *confunditō*, 76; *permulcetō*, 110; *praegnatiō*, 615, &c.; and so he might well have used *uespertilio*. Ovid, it is true, would not have shortened the -ō; but his periphrasis proves nothing, for another reason. *Met.* 4.

415 does not show that the Latin name for a "bat" was inadmissible in his verse, any more than *Met.* 11. 795, "aequor amat nomenque tenet quia mergitur illo," shows that the name of a "diver" *mergus* was. The author of the *Metamorphoses* felt himself entitled to use name or periphrasis as he might please, and so the hawk, which is designated in 344 of this book as *accipiter*, is described in 291 sq. as "hanc uolucrem rapto quae uiuit et omnes | terret aues." These two passages, then, throw no light on the quantity of *uespertilio*.¹

For no other Latin word is the ending *-ilio* attested.² On the other hand, we have *papilio*, *pumilio*, *upilio*.

Nor have our etymologists succeeded in giving any probable explanation of its formation, or of the *i* which they have accepted from the metrists. Their attempts may be seen in Walde's *Etymological Dictionary*, s. u., and the discussions there cited. It seems likely that the word is derived from an adjective **uespertus*, a parallel formation to *matutus* (*mater matuta, matutinus*); but nothing further has been ascertained, and, if the ending is *-ilio*, the word may well have been formed on the analogy of *papilio* (butterfly or moth) with other words enumerated above.

Having thus cleared our ground, we may approach the question of the reading in Phaedrus. The first three lines as printed in the *Classical Quarterly*, l. c., are:—

Bellum gerebant uolucres cum quadrupedibus
et modo uincebant, uincebantur denuo ;
at uespertilio dubios euentus timens.

This is the reading accepted by Burman and L. Mueller, but Professor Housman has recently suggested to me—

dubios timens euentus uespertilio.

¹ This is also the view of L. Mueller, *de re metrica*, p. 542.

² *Cilio* is no exception, as it is a bye form of *caelio*.

The first of these three lines is in metre, just as it stands in the paraphrase of Ademar. The restoration of the next line is possibly uncertain, but all its restorers make it end coincidentally with the sentence. For the third line we have carefully to consider the various versions, that is to say, Ademar's and those of the "Romulus" MSS., that Thiele reports from his *recensio Gallicana* and his *recensio Vetus*, pp. 173, 4, 5: compare Hervieux, *les fabulistes latins*, II², pp. 144, 215. The version of Ademar here, as generally elsewhere, is nearest to Phaedrus. But it has one defect. The fables in it are adorned by drawings, and the scribe had a way of cutting down the text to make more room for the illustrations: compare Thiele's remarks, *der illustrierte lateinische Aesop*, p. 39. He has done this in the fable before us, in lines 4 and 5 (cp. *Classical Quarterly*, I.c.), where what he gives us is not enough to make a verse. In these cases we are driven to the "Romulus" MSS., or, failing them, to conjecture. Here Ademar offers "uespertilio dubios euentus timens"; the *recensio Gallicana* "at uespertilio dubius et graues euentus timens" (with insignificant variants,¹ which may be seen in Thiele); the *recensio Vetus*, in which the traditional text is, as usual, freely edited, "at ubi uespertilio dubius extiterat." These versions, then, agree in recommending "at uespertilio," with the other words in the order of Ademar. This is clear from the lection "dubius," which, if not right, as it may be, is "dubios" assimilated through its neighbourhood to "uespertilio," "euentus timens" being taken by itself, "fearful of the upshot," and made clearer by the addition of *graues*. The reader must decide whether, taken in themselves, the readings of the paraphrasts are best explained by Burman's or by Professor Housman's proposal.

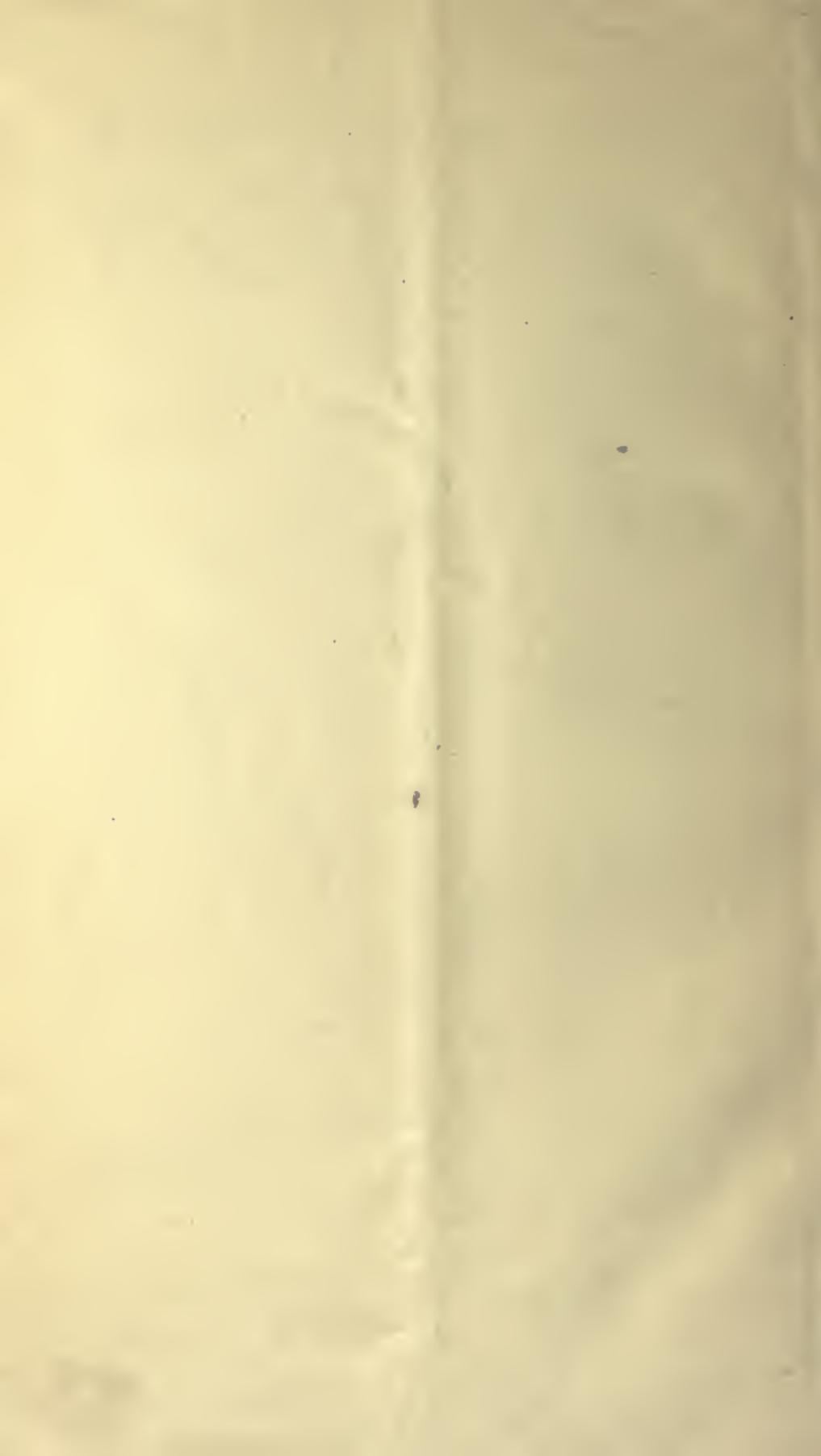
¹ "Timens euentus" should perhaps be mentioned.

Hervieux' collection of Latin fabulists includes three versions of this fable in classical metres. In one of these, *Gualterus Anglicus* 44, p. 338, periphrasis (presumably from Ovid) is used, "que sumit auis de uespere nomen." In the other two Alexander Neckham's *Nouus Aesopus* 2 (p. 393),¹ and the collection in a Bodleian MS. of the eleventh century called "ex Romulo Nilantii ortae fabulae metricae," 26, p. 684, the name is used, and it is *uespertilio*. Neckham's elegiacs, though by no means faultless, are at least not worse than those of Philomela's eulogist; for example, he does not go wrong over *graculus*. And it seems quite possible that he knew what was the correct pronunciation of *uespertilio* from reading *Phaedrus*, or in some other way.

¹Hervieux prints the text as it stands in the Paris MS. *Lat. 8471*, subjoining corrections in his notes, to which we might add at 10. 16 "cum bene patrisses" for "patires," and 28. 9 sq. "indignans ait illa 'Potes si sola meorum | turbam natorum pellere meque, uide'" for "nido."

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